

Frequently Asked Questions

What will I be asked?

- To report what is known about the situation;
- For the names and telephone numbers of other people who can provide information about the situation;
- If you know of any safety concerns.

What else is important to know?

- If you report in good faith, you have immunity from liability.

Where can I get more information?

Visit www.adsa.dshs.wa.gov for more information about adult abuse and prevention and additional resources and programs to support vulnerable adults.

Ordering Publications: You may order this brochure and other DSHS publications through the Department of Printing's (DOP) General Store. Go to the DOP website at: www.prt.wa.gov.

It is the policy of the Department of Social and Health Services that no person, because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, creed, or disability, shall be discriminated against in any aspect of program activities.

Adult Protective Services



A Guide to Reporting Suspected Abuse of Adults Who Are Vulnerable



Photo courtesy of Baltimore County Department of Aging
DSHS 22-810(X) (Rev. 9/15)

What is Adult Protective Services?



Adult Protective Services (APS) investigates reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults and offers protective services when necessary. A vulnerable adult is any adult 60 years of age or older with the functional, mental, or physical inability to care for himself or herself. Other adults considered vulnerable are 18 years or older and have a legal guardian, have a developmental disability, live in a facility licensed by DSHS/AL TSA, receive services from a DSHS contracted individual provider, receive in-home services through a licensed health, hospice, or home care agency, and/or have a personal care aide who performs care under his/her direction for compensation.

All of us, as responsible citizens, must work to prevent or stop adults who are vulnerable from being harmed.

You can:

1. Stay alert to possible signs and symptoms of the different forms of abuse.
2. Know if you are considered a mandatory reporter.
3. Know what happens when you contact APS.
4. Report suspected abuse immediately.

1

Stay alert to possible signs and symptoms of the different forms of abuse

Abuse is intentionally causing pain, suffering, and/or injury to a vulnerable adult. Abuse can be improper use of restraints, physical, mental, exploitive, or sexual. Signs include:

- Unexplained injuries or behavior
- Vulnerable adult appears afraid of a person or certain situation
- Vulnerable adult is kept isolated
- Vulnerable adult reports abuse.

Abandonment is when a person who has responsibility for providing care to a vulnerable adult deserts or leaves him/her without basic life necessities. Signs include:

- The vulnerable adult is deserted in their home
- The vulnerable adult reports being abandoned.

Neglect is refusing or failing to provide a vulnerable adult with basic life necessities or not taking action to prevent harm or pain. **Self-neglect** is the person's own failure to maintain health and safety. Signs include:

- Sudden decline in physical appearance
- Untreated injuries or health problems
- Unsafe living conditions.

Exploitation is intentionally taking advantage of a vulnerable adult either personally or financially. Signs include:

- Disappearance of possessions or property
- Sudden transfer of money, unauthorized use of bankcards, and/or forge signature on checks
- Undue influence or coercion.

2

What happens when you call APS?

APS staff will ask you:

- The vulnerable adult's name, address, contact information, and any other important information

Important Facts:

- The vulnerable adult is interviewed in private
- Protective services may be offered in the least restrictive environment available to the needs of the vulnerable adult
- The vulnerable adult must consent to services and be informed of the right to refuse or withdraw from services. DSHS cannot remove adults from where they live or place them in a different residence against their wishes
- DSHS will report suspected crimes to law enforcement

Your name and information about the vulnerable adult is confidential (public disclosure or other state and federal regulations may apply).



3

Know if you are a Mandatory Reporter

By law, you are a mandatory reporter if you are a (n):

- DSHS Employee
- Individual Provider contracted to provide services to a DSHS client
- County Coroner or Medical Examiner
- Employee of a facility licensed by DSHS, including Adult Family Homes, Nursing Homes, Residential Habilitation Centers, Boarding Homes, and Soldiers' Homes
- Social Worker
- Health Care Provider as defined in RCW 18.130, such as a doctor or nurse
- Christian Science Practitioner
- Employee of a Social Service, Welfare, Mental Health, Adult Day Care, Home Health, Home Care, or Hospice Agency
- Law Enforcement Officer
- Professional School Personnel

Mandatory reporters are **required by law** to report suspected abuse.

Report immediately if you have **reasonable cause** to believe that a vulnerable adult is being harmed. You do not need proof of harm.

Report suspected physical or sexual assault to **both** law enforcement and DSHS.*

Report immediately to the coroner or medical examiner, law enforcement and DSHS if you suspect a death was caused by abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

* For further information about reporting actions between vulnerable adults, see RCW 74.34.035.

4

Report suspected abuse immediately!

Region 1

Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Yakima Counties

1-800-459-0421

TTY: 1-509-568-3086

Fax: 1-509-568-3699

Email: R1APSIntake@dshs.wa.gov

Region 2

Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties

1-866-221-4909

TTY: 1-800-977-5456

Fax: 1-206-626-5705

Email: R2HCSAPSIntake@dshs.wa.gov

Region 3

Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, and Wahkiakum Counties

1-877-734-6277

TTY: 1-360-664-9469

Fax: 1-360-664-9103

Email: HCS-R3S-APSIntake@dshs.wa.gov

For complaints about care or services in facilities:

1-800-562-6078 TTY: 1-800-737-7931



Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

1-866-737-7931/Voice/TTY